

Follow the footpath over the stile and over the field. Take the track down to the right. Turn right at the end of the plantation before the stile and through the woods to the stream. Walk downstream to find the wooden footbridge over the stream. Across the stream two footpaths are available. One runs next to the water and the other is a drier route at the top of the field. Head downstream toward the church.

10 The Waterside Valley is an important wildlife habitat. The woodland and open grassland support a wide range of plant species, and this is also a good area for butterflies and birds. Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Kestrel and Kingfisher are among species recorded here. Deer may also be seen.

11 At the top of the final field (to your left) are the remains of two World War II Home Guard Pill Boxes. These 'type 29' pill boxes formed part of 'Stop Line Green', a continuous linear defence some 100 miles long running in a semi-circle around Bristol. This defence was designed to stop any German tanks invading from the east, and protect the port of Bristol to enable evacuation or re-supply. The line often follows the railway or river, as steep railway cuttings or deep rivers provided barriers that tanks could not cross. Tank traps (ditches) and anti-tank bollards (large concrete blocks) survive elsewhere along the line in the local area and form part of this interesting survival of military archaeology. The second of these Pill Boxes is placed at the boundary of Radstock College grounds. Remnants of iron fencing here act as a reminder that this was once the grounds of South Hill House (now demolished), home of James McMurtrie, the Waldegrave Company's General Mines Manager.

Approaching the field gate by the church yard, the stream was dammed here to form a swimming pool. Changing rooms have gone, but the pool remains and can be reached by crossing the field by the school.



12 St Nicholas Church dates mainly from 1873, although the tower is much earlier and a church has stood on this site since the early 1200's. Inside are many historic items including a mediaeval stone preaching cross. The graveyard provides an interesting detour. Notable graves include that of Reverend Nelson Ward, grandson of Admiral Lord Nelson and Radstock vicar from the 1850's until 1880. Also of interest, in the lower section of the churchyard near the school, is the grave of footballer Ernest Hyman. Mr Hyman (22) died as a result of injuries sustained in a football match between Yeovil and Taunton on Boxing Day 1926. His memorial was erected 'with great affection' by Yeovil and Petters United Football Club supporters, and has a stone football at the foot of the grave. Fine views over the town can be seen from the top corner of the churchyard.

Continue back toward Radstock centre. Take Fortescue Road past the old shopping area.

Many of the historic shops have undergone repair and the quality of style and materials contrasts sharply with their modern counterparts opposite. Holes in the stonework of the photographers shop to the corner of Fortescue Road are thought to be attributed to a German ball-bearing bomb dropped during World War II. The spaghetti junction of railways here would have been an attractive target for the Luftwaffe returning from bombing raids on Bristol.



Blue Route

Radstock Haydon Walk

**Approximately 3 miles,
taking around 1 hour. Fields
waterlogged in wet weather.**

**One of four walks exploring the built
and natural heritage of Radstock**



Radstock
Museum



Heritage
Lottery Fund



Norton Radstock
Town Council



Local Heritage Initiative



change
Somerset
Small actions for a better future



The
Countryside
Agency

Start at the Pit Wheel, outside Radstock Museum. Cross Frome Road and Fortescue Road and progress into The Street

- 1** The shops in the central area were built around 1900, and provided for all community needs. The Radco superstore opposite was opened in 1959. The car park to the rear is on the site of Radstock Rectory, demolished in 1994 when the store was extended. Although of stark twentieth century design, Radco epitomises the independent nature of Radstock. The Radstock Co-operative Society, which runs the store, has a proud history of serving the town through difficult times such as mining strikes, when goods were often reduced to cost.

Approaching Victoria Square, cross the road in front of Radstock Working Mens Club.

- 2** The club is a listed building with a late eighteenth century façade which probably conceals an older structure. It was once the home of George Coombs, who owned Coombs' Brewery and was an influential local figure.

Head toward St Nicholas' Church

- 3** Victoria Hall was built in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. On the right is the modern library, which stands on the site of the Great Western Railway station master's house. Further along Church Street on the left when approaching the church yard is Manor Farm House Nursing Home. This was previously Manor Farm, and is a fine example of the local rural architecture. Further along were outbuildings (now converted to housing) and attached to the far end is a water-wheel that powered farm machinery.



Continue uphill towards Kilmersdon Road.

- 4** The 'new' St. Nicholas' school is to the left. An entrance road here used to serve the 'Marcroft Wagon Repair Yard', where many men were employed repairing Great Western Railway goods wagons. Some of the derelict working sheds of the Wagon Works survive.
- 5** Near the top of the hill on the right is a bench by a wooden five bar gate. The gate and stile lead into the English Nature site of Kilmersdon Road Quarry. This former stone quarry is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and contains many important fossils contained in the quarry face. 195 million years ago this area comprised an island chain surrounded by a shallow sea, which has left abundant marine fossils including clam shells and ammonites. The rock sequence at the quarry is very thin, suggesting that it formed close to the shoreline of one of the islands. There is an interpretation board at the rear of this site.
- 6** The top of Haydon Hill affords fine views. The coal waste tips ('batches') of Radstock and Tynning Pits produce a distinctive local landscape, now covered in conifer trees. Further around the skyline to your right is the modern housing areas of Peasedown St John and another range of conifer covered coal waste tips at the Braysdown Pit, closed in the 1950's.

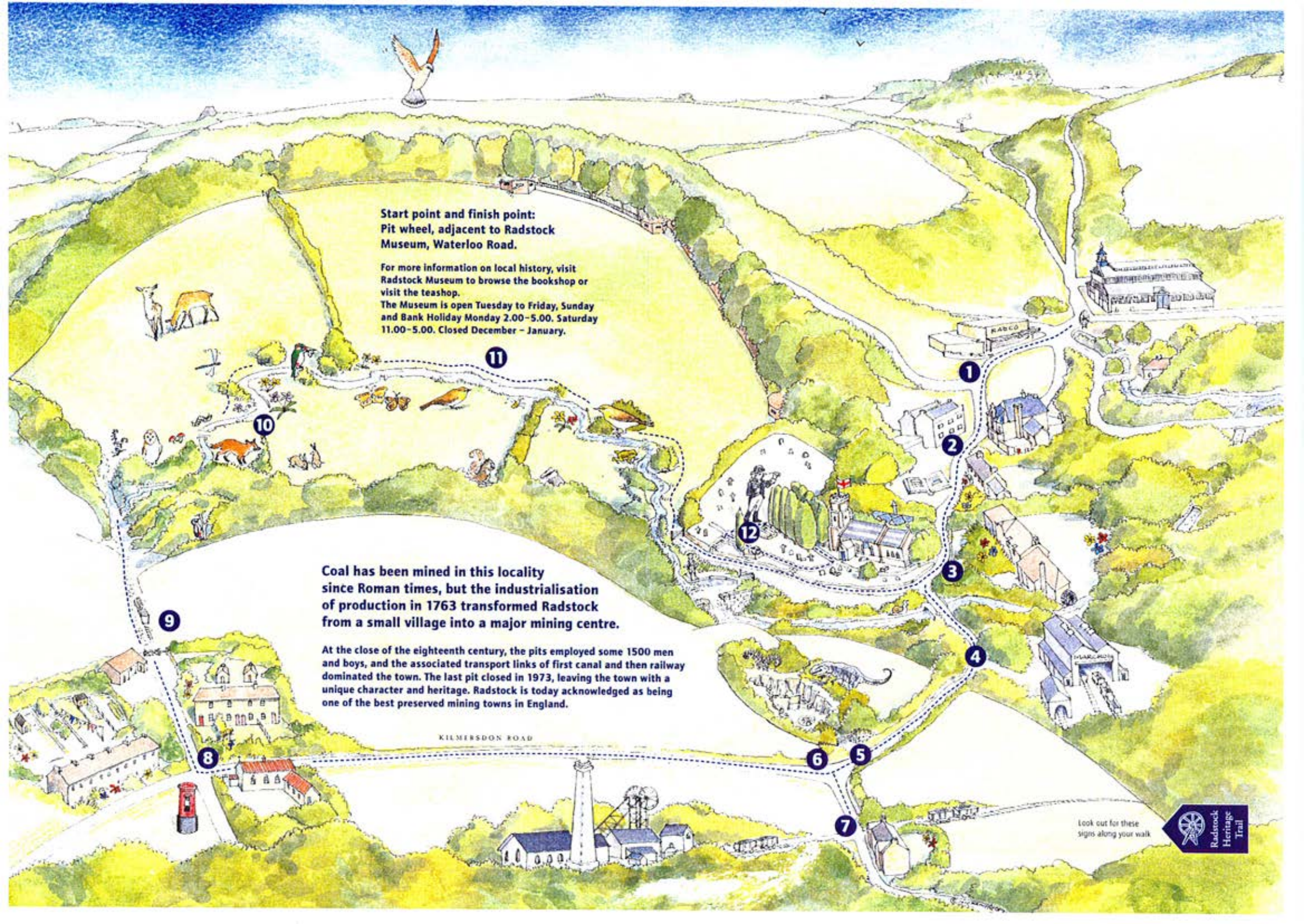
Cross the road and follow the access into the industrial site.

- 7** The present industrial buildings cover the site of Kilmersdon (Haydon) Pit. Sunk in 1874, the pit shafts were 875ft deep and the two tall chimneys were local landmarks. This was one of the last Somerset coal pits to close in 1973. The pit wheel taken from this site is the one that now stands outside Radstock Museum. On the opposite side from the industrial estate is a footpath between houses. This was the route where a standard gauge rail track brought coal 1/2 mile from the pit across the road to a meet a steep incline tram way. The coal trucks were then lowered down the incline to join the GWR Frome to Radstock line in the valley below. Empty trucks were brought back up the incline for Mr 'Herbie Loader' to pull them by steam train back into the pit yard for re-filling.



Return to the Haydon sign and continue on into Haydon village

- 8** Ranks of terraced houses line this road, and are typical of the local style. Traditionally they were built of white lias stone with slate roofs, although many later alterations can be seen. Large vegetable gardens can be seen to the rear, together with garden buildings that housed wash house, boiler, coal store, and toilet. The tin church (now boarded up and sadly with permission for removal) and schoolroom served the village for many years, as did several of these 'Mission Room' Churches around the North Somerset mining villages. Hundreds of corrugated iron chapels were made by various companies such as J.C.Humphrey, London, in the nineteenth century and sold by mail order in kit form. Many were exported, via Bristol docks, to all corners of the empire. Increasingly few survive. The concrete track by the side of the Post Office carried a rail track from Kilmersdon Pit and across the road to take waste material to the tip site.
- ### **Take the track on the right opposite the Post Office down to Haydon's Que and Social Club.**
- 9** Past the Haydon Que and Social Club is the Kilmersdon waste site. The material you will walk over is thousands of tons of black shale colliery waste.



Start point and finish point:
Pit wheel, adjacent to Radstock
Museum, Waterloo Road.

For more information on local history, visit
Radstock Museum to browse the bookshop or
visit the teasop.
The Museum is open Tuesday to Friday, Sunday
and Bank Holiday Monday 2.00-5.00. Saturday
11.00-5.00. Closed December - January.

**Coal has been mined in this locality
since Roman times, but the industrialisation
of production in 1763 transformed Radstock
from a small village into a major mining centre.**

At the close of the eighteenth century, the pits employed some 1500 men
and boys, and the associated transport links of first canal and then railway
dominated the town. The last pit closed in 1973, leaving the town with a
unique character and heritage. Radstock is today acknowledged as being
one of the best preserved mining towns in England.

KILMERSDON ROAD

Look out for these
signs along your walk

